

Wellbeing for the Bush **FIRST PEOPLES HEALTH WORKFORCE**

To all the deadly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers out there in rural and remote communities - this is for you. Many of you have extraordinary resilience and strength in the face of difficult and challenging times. This is a reminder that everyone needs to take time for themselves to maintain their own wellbeing.

As a health worker it can be challenging to balance the demands of your role, with the demands of family, community and kinship. Sometimes the last person we care for is ourselves. Self-care is often the first thing to go when we are busy and under stress, but it's essential to helping us stay well.

It is an incredibly rewarding job working as a First Peoples Health Worker.

Rewarding aspects

- Connecting to community and building relationships
- Giving and receiving knowledge
- Speaking up for communities
- Being part of the solutions to improve Indigenous health and access to services.



There can also be many stressors that can take their toll...

Sources of stress

- Workloads – high and demanding workloads
- Expectations – managing complex family/community obligations and expectations
- Recognition, respect and support – workers may lack support and feel isolated
- Boundaries – managing personal and professional boundaries
- Racism – coworkers, mainstream community and systems you work in
- Complex personal circumstances
- Loss, grief, Sorry Business – coworkers and managers may not recognise the impact of loss, grief and the importance of Sorry Business
- Culturally safe ways of working – mainstream colleagues and managers may not understand Indigenous ways of working
- Working conditions – can be challenging in rural and remote settings
- Funding, job security and salaries.



7 areas to consider

- **Social Support:** Social support and your mob can keep you healthier and happier, creating a buffer against stress. Surround yourself with people who understand how you feel. Friends and family can pick you up when you're down, burnt out and tired.
- **Sleep:** We all know how important sleep is but sometimes we fail to make it a priority.
- **Exercise:** A walk, a swim – get back in nature and feel the earth between your toes.
- **Food:** Healthy food is fuel for your body.
- **Fun:** What do you love to do? Painting, sport, walking, swimming with your kids, calling a cuz to catch-up? Do something fun and just for you every week.
- **Care for your health:** Remember women's and men's business and don't forget to see your doctor.
- **Quiet time to unplug:** Create and visit special places and spaces in your days or weeks where you unplug from everything.

What can you do?

There are two main ways to prevent and reduce stress as a First Peoples Health Worker.

1. The first way is for health agencies to provide support for you as a worker. This can include supervision and mentoring, debriefing, flexible work arrangements, role clarity, and culturally safe practices including cultural supervision.
2. The second way is for you to do things that reduce your own stress.
 - Connect to community and culture
 - Laughter
 - Have realistic expectations
 - Prioritise tasks
 - Maintain a balance between work and other aspects of your life
 - Enjoy the successes
 - Have a yarn and debrief with someone you trust
 - Set up systems to be able to check in regularly with mentors/supervisors
 - Use services like the Bush Support Line.

More information

Keep yourself healed: Self-care for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJU07iAYN_0

Feeling Deadly, Working Deadly: Indigenous Worker Wellbeing. nceta.flinders.edu.au/workforce/indigenous-aod-workforce/feeling-deadly-working-deadly-indigenous-worker-wellbeing